Thoughts From One Superintendent's Wife—To Another—

by CAROLINE C. TWOMBLY

I have been talking about executive's wives for 35 years. Now that I am to put these thoughts on paper, I am not at all sure it is a good idea, but I am sure that every executive's wife reading this will be certain it does not apply to her.

I have worked in electricity and electronics for 30 years while my husband worked in another profession. Through the years I met many executive's wives from all areas of the business world. I met far too few who really understood or wanted to understand what their husband's job was, what abilities he had to have to stay in that position, what it required of him or how it affected him mentally or physically. The greatest percentage of the women were mainly interested in the social level his salary permitted. What he did interested them only to the point of how many days off he could take and when he would have his next vacation.

I've been married to the same man for 49 years. Thirty-eight of those years he has been a golf course superintendent. This is why I am interested in the wives of golf course superintendents. There are some who think that, because their husband is a golf course superintendent, they are not an executive's wife? They are very wrong!

Webster's dictionary defines "executive" as any person or body charged with administrative or executive work. Your husband and mine are executives, but the calibre of the executive is up to you and him. Club members, other superintendents, officials from other areas of the golf world, club managers, golf professionals, salesmen and even his own workers look at the things he does and listen to what he says and judge the type of executive he is. If he is assured and self-confident, dedicated to his club and the personnel, they then know he has an understanding wife. His willingness to stay for an unexpected meeting or to deal with a sudden problem; his always-on-time record; his ability to return to the club in the evening or on a day off to straighten out some major problem; all of these show your love and concern for him, your understanding, your ability to adjust your life to the demands of his job.

If he is anything but assured and self-confident, chances are his wife is not understanding and he is torn between two loves. He is never sure how his wife is going to accept the demands of his position, neither is he sure how the club is going to accept the demands his wife makes on him. He tries to balance the two but rarely succeeds.

It is to this group of wives I address myself. Fortunately, they are in the minority.

When he shows an unwillingness to stay for any unexpected problem or meeting or, if he does stay, has anxiety to leave as soon as possible, he demonstrates a lack of understanding at home. His tendency to call on one of his men to take care of a problem that occurs after working hours or on one of his days off, shows that you lack concern for what happens to the club, its property or its equipment. Acres of very valuable land and thousands of dollars worth of equipment are entrusted to *his* care, not to one of the workers on the course.

He does love his work. If he did not, he would be doing something else. He loves you and wants to make the best living he can for you. You say he has competent help and he does, but if any one of those men were as competent as he, *he* would be superintendent, not your husband.

A wife must remember that chinch bugs, beetles and worms have no respect for what you might want to do. The insects are hungry and their one object is to eat as much as they can before they are discovered. Disease strikes any time conditions are right and it has no regard for what you have planned. Of course the summer rains are needed, but your husband didn't ask for them to come down in torrents to wash out sand bunkers, stand in puddles all over his golf course and, when the sun comes out, cook his grass like spinach. Summer downpours have also been known to wash out newly seeded areas and destroy important construction work he has started. Plans must often be changed.

Our men, the superintendents, are almost in the genius class. They are doctors who identify and cure diseases of the grass; entomologists who identify and destroy the insects and worms, part time lawyers who know the legal codes of

town, city, county, state and federal governments regarding electricity, gas, gasoline and noise levels. They must know what, how much and how often different chemicals can be used, labor laws and building codes. They are engineers, for they must rebuild or construct greens, tees, fairways, bridges, cart paths and in some cases buildings. They are diplomats maintaining good relations with their members, club officials, their employees, other superintendents, salesmen and various groups within their professional sphere.

Our men are great people but to be at their best, they need our understanding and our cooperation. Your man may need to release tension by talking to you. He isn't really asking for advice, just for the one he loves to listen to him. Often problems resolve themselves just by talking about them. He needs to know you love him and that you understand that he loves you. You may not understand his problems and be able to give advice, but if you don't listen, you never will understand that it is his self-respect, his integrity and his desire to make the best living he can for **you** that keeps him on the job when **you** want him home.

Some Agronomic Aspects of Turf Fertigation[1]

by G.H. SNYDER and E.O. BURT[2]

The pros and cons of turf fertigation (fertilization through the irrigation system) have been presented many times, but the lists vary little from author to author. The chief disadvantages cited relate to engineering problems, such as uneven water distribution, equipment corrosion and fertilizer precipitation within irrigation lines. Considerable attention has been paid to these problems. Methods of injecting fertilizer into irrigation systems have been described elsewhere. However, agronomic aspects of fertigation have received little attention from research scientists. In general, fertigation has been practiced on an "all or nothing" basis which makes agronomic evaluation difficult. Greatly needed is research utilizing randomized, replicated plots which provide accurate comparisons among treatments and statistical evaluation.

We have attempted to provide scientifically gathered information on agronomic aspects of fertigation for several years. However, considerably more time is needed to get a reasonably complete picture in our geographical region. Moreover, research by others is needed in other regions. Thus at this time agronomic discussions of turf fertigation must combine educated speculation with limited research data.

Light, Frequent Fertilizations

The primary advantage of fertigation is that fertilizer may be applied with very little labor required beyond that needed for the usual irrigation. Because of this, fertilizer can be applied very frequently, but at low rates per application. This aspect of fertigation is sometimes overlooked or underemphasized.

It is widely felt that frequent, light fertilizer applications will minimize the effects of poor water distribution. Observations made during the course of our research agreed with this contention, although the study was not designed specifically to test this theory, and the degree to which the theory holds will vary among irrigation installations. Probably the best reason for using frequent light applications of fertilizer is to encourage relatively constant grass growth with respect to time. Particularly in the case of nitrogen (N), frequent light applications will minimize unwanted flushes of growth which alternate with periods of N starvation, a cyclic condition that generally results from periodic heavy applications of N. We have found little difference in this respect between daily and weekly N applications through the irrigation system, which agrees with data of other workers using conventional application methods. But we feel that the above mentioned cycling may be observed with N fertigation intervals of greater than one week. Turf comes closer to requiring weekly, or even more frequent irrigations than most other field-grown crops, and in this respect is well suited to fertigation.

Reduced Leaching Losses

Since very little fertilizer will be present in the soil solution at any one time when light frequent applications are made, the efficiency of plant uptake should be good. In support of this, we have observed reduced N leaching losses when daily N applications through the irrigation system are compared to conventional N fertilization at three week intervals. Fertigation is often promoted as a

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